

## ROD Compliance Review: Survey & Manage Wildlife Species

*Salmon and Scott River Ranger District, Klamath National Forest*

### Project Name: Lover's Canyon Project

**Prepared By:** Sam Cuenca, District Wildlife Biologist

**Project Type:** Forest Restoration Project **Date:** August 23, 2017

**S&M List Date:** 2003 Settlement Agreement List, as per Regional Forester direction letter dated May 13, 2014. Project initiated after April 30, 2015.

### PROPOSED ACTION

The Salmon/Scott River Ranger District of the Klamath National Forest proposes the Lover's Canyon Project to improve forest health and diversity, improve threatened and endangered species habitat, implement objectives of the Lower Scott River Fire Safe Council Community Wildfire Protection Plan, and provide commodity outputs. This proposal treats about 2,700 acres within the 11,810 acre project boundary.

The Lover's Canyon Project is proposed within the Boulder, Canyon, and Kelsey Creek watersheds of the Scott River Ranger District of the Klamath National Forest. It is located in Siskiyou County approximately 15 miles west of Fort Jones, California, in Sections 25 and 36 of Township 44 North, Range 12 West; Sections 19, 21, and 25-35 of Township 44 North, Range 11 West; Section 1 of Township 43 North, Range 12 West; and Sections 2-8 of Township 43 North, Range 11 West, all Mt. Diablo Meridian.

Elevation ranges from about 2,300 to 6,900 feet.

The project is being conducted under the authority of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act (HFRA). Section 102(a) of the act describes authorized projects under HFRA. This project meets two of the five criteria in that section: projects taking place within the wildland urban interface, and projects containing threatened and endangered species habitat. The project area contains 6,371 acres of wildland urban interface, and the entire project area is within designated Critical Habitat for the northern spotted owl (NSO).

### Management Direction

The 1995 Klamath National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan, as amended; Klamath National Forest 1995) includes Standards and Guidelines from the Northwest Forest Plan. The Forest Plan provides forest-wide and management area (MA) direction for project-level projects. MAs within the project area are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1. MAs found within the project boundary.**

Management Area	Pages in Forest Plan*	Acres within Project Area	Percentage of Project area (%)
MA 15- Partial Retention Visual Quality Objective (VQO)	4-126 to 4-127	5,106	43%
MA 10- Riparian Reserves (RRs)	4-108 to 4-114	2,948	25%
MA 5- Special Habitat	4-82 to 4-94	1,253	11%
MA 11-Retention VQO	4-115 to 4-116	703	6%
MA 13- Recreational River	4-120 to 4-122	353	3%
MA 17-General Forest	4-131 to 4-132	342	3%
Private Lands Within Project Area	N/A	1,105	9%

\* Page numbers from the July 29, 2010 version of the Forest Plan. Accessed online at

<http://www.fs.usda.gov/main/klamath/landmanagement/planning>.

In addition to Forest Plan direction, the interdisciplinary team (IDT) considered guidance from mid-level assessments or guidance documents, including the Canyon Ecosystem Analysis (also known as a Watershed Analysis, WA; Klamath National Forest 1994). The project area also contains about 1,950 acres of inventoried roadless areas and 6,371 acres of wildland urban interface. The inventoried roadless areas are being avoided with the project design. A majority of the commercial treatment acres fall within the wildland urban interface. The project falls within a high use recreation area and includes three trailheads, two developed campsites, and multiple dispersed campsites.

The IDT designed the Lover's Canyon Project to be consistent with all applicable law, regulation, policy, and direction.

(WA) was prepared to provide a means by which the landscape can be understood as an ecological system, to use this knowledge to help shape the landscape patterns created through National Forest land management activities, and to provide recommendations consistent with the Forest Plan. The Canyon WA describes desired conditions for stand structural classes.

## **Table 2. Desired condition range and Lover's Canyon Project Purpose and Need for Action**

The purpose and need of this project is to manage the Lover's Canyon Project landscape so that individual landscape elements and patterns are resilient to ecological processes occurring on the landscape scale, including wildfire, while managing for certain habitat characteristics, such as those for the NSO, visual objectives, and sustainable resource outputs. Through collaboration with the Lower Scott River Fire Safe Council, a second purpose was identified. This second purpose is to implement objectives outlined in the Lower Scott River Community Wildfire Protection Plan (Lower Scott River Fire Safe Council, 2007). This action is needed since a resilient landscape is a diverse one, where no single element being removed from the ecosystem will affect the entire system. One measure of diversity on a landscape level is the stand structural class, expressed as a percentage of the landscape it covers as determined using Pacific Southwest Region's remote sensing data. This shows that much of the project area is in the small (11- to 24.9-inch diameter at breast height, dbh) conifer structural class. Change is needed to develop a more diverse and resilient landscape.

**The Canyon Watershed Assessment existing condition of the structural classes within the project area.**

<b>Structural Class</b>	<b>Desired Condition Range*</b>	<b>Existing Condition</b>
Seedling/Sapling (0- to 5.9-inch dbh)	5 to 15%	6%
Poles (6- to 10.9-inch dbh)	10 to 20%	7%
Small Conifer (11- to 24.9-inch dbh)	15 to 35%	46%
Medium/Large Conifer (>25-inch dbh)	40 to 60%	38%

*\*As defined in the Canyon WA (page 48).*

As seen in Table 2, the landscape is currently lacking in “pole” and “medium/large conifer” stands, while nearly fifty percent of the existing stands are in the “small” conifer class. The purpose and need for action is to accelerate the development of “small” conifer stands, moving them into the “medium/large” size classes to fall within the range of desired conditions for the landscape. These ranges, along with individual element descriptions, are designed to be consistent with landscape-scale processes; provide a variety of habitat values; provide a variety of opportunities for human uses; as well as sustainable and predictable levels of resource outputs (US Forest Service 1994). This action responds to the goals and objectives outlined in the Forest Plan, and helps move the project area towards the desired future conditions described in that plan (Forest Plan, Chapter 4, pages 4-14 to 4-16).

### **Proposed Action**

The Forest Service proposes this project to meet the purpose and need. The proposed action will treat approximately 2,700 acres within the 11,810 acre project boundary. Acres by treatment type are described below and do not account for the overlap in treatment types. RRs within and adjacent to treatment units will be evaluated on a site-by-site basis for treatment, and will include equipment and treatment exclusion zones. Treatment acreages are approximate at this point and may be adjusted and refined following scoping.

Treatments would include thinning on up to 2,400 acres; creating fuel breaks on about 190 acres; removal of hazard trees along National Forest System (NFS) roads, county roads, campgrounds, and other high use recreation areas within the project boundary; and prescribed burning. Time frame for implementation of all aspects of this project is estimated to take about 10 years.

Thinning prescriptions will be developed on a stand-by-stand basis to meet the objectives of the purpose and need. However, in general the prescription will be a variable density thinning from below, focusing on stands in the small conifer structural class. Of the 2,700 acres selected for potential treatment, more than half are existing plantations (about 1,700 acres). The remaining area is made up of previously managed natural stands. At this time, the Forest Service is proposing to accomplish these treatments through hand and mechanical thinning with ground-based and skyline logging systems, while hand piling, lop and scattering, or biomass harvesting is proposed in existing plantations. Activity fuels within harvest units will be hand piled, landing piled, and made available for biomass or permitted public fuelwood collection prior to burning. As the project is proposing to enter previously managed stands, no new road construction is proposed. Existing NFTS roads and existing roadbeds will be used for project implementation. Existing roadbeds will also be used for temporary access, and then will be closed and hydrologically stabilized following unit treatments. No new temporary access roads will be created outside of harvest units.

There would be three types of fuel breaks created within the project area: one ridge line fuel break of about 40 acres, a fuel break above private property in the project area of about 11 acres, and roadside fuels reduction for escape routes on private property of about 140 acres. Fuel breaks would vary in width depending on the site condition. The

ridgeline fuel break would be up to 200 feet either side of a road system on the ridge line (NFS Road 44N55). Private property fuel breaks would be up to 200 feet upslope of private property. The roadside fuel breaks would be up to 200 feet either side of identified NFS and county roads. The fuel break treatments would involve cutting and piling of ladder fuels, including brush, hardwoods, and conifer trees less than 10 inches dbh.

At this time, one prescribed burning block of about 165 acres is being proposed. It would be accomplished where multiple harvest treatments overlap and road systems create logical control features. For most of the 165 acres, it would be a second entry with prescribed fire, following up on previous NEPA decisions. Other opportunities for prescribed burning are still being assessed.

### Survey and Manage Species Status in Project

Species listed in Table 3 are considered rare and uncommon and were compiled from the 2003 Settlement Agreement List, as per Regional Forester direction letter (May 13, 2014) and incorporates those vertebrate and/or invertebrate species whose known or suspected range includes the Lover's

Canyon Project Analysis Area. Project was initiated after April 30, 2015 and follows 2014 Option B for Survey and Manage Category.

**Table 3. Survey & Manage Species Analyzed in the Lover's Canyon Project Area**

Species	S&M Category	Survey Triggers			Survey Results			Site Management
		Within Range of the Species?	Project Contains Suitable habitat?	Project may significantly negatively affect species/habitat?	Surveys Required?	Survey Date (month/year)	Sites Known or Found?	
Vertebrates								
Siskiyou Mountains Salamander (Plethodon stormi)	A	Yes	Yes	No	No	N/ A	N/A	None. No known sites. No habitat affected.
Scott Bar Salamander(Plethodon asupak)	A	Yes	Yes	No	No	N/A	N/A	None. No known sites. No habitat affected.
Great gray owl (Strix nebulosa)	A	No	No	No	No	N/A	N/A	None. Outside of Species Range
Oregon red tree vole (Arborimus longicaudus)	C	No	No	No	No	N/A	No	None. Outside of Species Range
Mollusks								
Tehama Chaparral (Trilobopsis tehemana)	A	Yes	Yes	No	No	N/A	No	No known sites. Surveys not required. No talus habitats affected
Oregon Shoulderband (Helminthoglypta hertleini)	None	Yes	Yes	No	No	N/A	No	No known sites. Surveys not required. No habitat affected

Species	S&M	Survey Triggers			Survey Results			Site
Klamath Sideband ( <i>Mondadenia fidelis</i> <i>klamathica</i> )	None	Yes	Yes	No	No	N/A	No	No known sites. Surveys not required. No habitat affected
Yellow-based Sideband ( <i>Monodenia infumata</i> <i>ochromphalus</i> )	None	Yes	Yes	No	No	N/A	No	No known sites. Surveys not required. No habitat affected.
Hooded Lancetooth ( <i>Ancotrema voyanum</i> )	None	No	No	No	No	N/A	No	None. Outside of Species Range.
Siskiyou Sideband ( <i>Monadenia chaceana</i> )	B	Yes	Yes	No	No	N/A	No	None. No known sites. Surveys not required. No habitat affected
Blue-gray Tail Dropper <i>Prophysaon coeruleum</i>	A	No	No	No	No	N/A	No	No habitat, Outside of Species Range.
Trinity Shoulderband <i>Helminthoglypta</i> <i>talmadgei</i>	D	No	No	No	No	N/A	No	No habitat, Outside of Species Range

### Management of Known Sites

There are currently no known sites. Based on current direction for this portion of the Salmon Scott River Ranger District, no surveys are required for this project.

### Conclusion

Based on the results of the project changes in the post-damage assessment of the winter 2017 landslides for the Lover's Canyon area, there is no measurable change in Survey and Manage mollusk habitats. New landslides within the project area total about 29 acres of active features. Approximately 15 acres of these landslides overlap with proposed treatment units. The landslides did not measurably affect terrestrial mollusk habitat. The changes proposed in the 15 acres of overlap are less than what was originally analyzed in the project wildlife analysis.

Based on the preceding information (Tables 3 and 4) regarding the status of surveys and site management for Survey & Manage wildlife species, it is my determination that for Lover's Canyon Project Alternatives 2 and 3 surveys will not be required as identified in the provisions of the 2003 *Survey and Manage Settlement Agreement as per the Regional Forester Direction Letter dated May 13, 2014.*

/s/ Sam Cuenca  
Sam Cuenca  
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Salmon and Scott River Ranger District

8/23/2017  
Date